

The Soul's Death Unto Sin

by William Gadsby

William Gadsby's sermon explores the profound implications of being dead to sin and alive in Christ, emphasizing the transformative power of grace and spiritual baptism.

Scripture: Isaiah 30:15, Hosea 2:14, John 8:36, John 11:25, Romans 5:20, Romans 6:7, Romans 6:14, Romans 7:4, Romans 8:33

Topics: "Dead To Sin", "Gods Grace"

Description

William Gadsby preaches about the profound concept of being dead to sin and freed from its power through the body of Christ. He emphasizes the need for a spiritual death to self and the law, leading to a deep realization of God's grace and mercy. Gadsby highlights the ongoing struggle with sin in the believer's life, but also the ultimate victory and freedom found in Christ. He challenges the notion of continuous joy and perfection, pointing out the necessity of trials and tribulations to deepen one's faith and reliance on God's grace.

Transcript

"For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:7)

IN the chapter preceding this, the apostle has been led by the Divine Author of the Word to take a view of the two Adams and their two seeds; that Adam the first, by his awful sin and apostacy, brought death and condemnation upon all his offspring, so that in him, in his very first act of transgression, they "all sinned and came short of the glory of God," and thus, "by one man's offence death reigned by one;" (Rom. 5:17) but that Adam the Second, "the Lord from Heaven," (1 Cor. 15:47) represented an elect seed, and had them all in his loins, chosen by the Father and locked up safe in him.

Though that seed fell with the rest in Adam the first, in Adam the second they were preserved from the awful damnation that their sin had merited, and, by his obedience and the invincible power of the Spirit, all are brought to newness of life and to justification of life, and so are made the rich partakers of the mysteries of the gospel of God; and concerning them it is said, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20) I recollect preaching, I think three times, in an Arminian chapel; and the last time, one of the leaders of the place said, "I should like you to preach from that text: 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'" "Well," I said, "if the Lord should lead me to speak from it, I must necessarily upset your creed;" and I believe the Lord did lead me to speak from it; and I endeavoured to prove that their creed must go to wreck, according to that truth, if laid down fairly.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." If that is universal, what an awful lie it is! Because grace has not kept pace with the sins of the damned in hell; they are under the dominion of sin now, and will be for ever, and, therefore, grace has not "much more abounded than sin" there. Consequently, that text must be limited to the spiritual seed of Christ. "Where sin abounded" in them, and it awfully abounded too, "grace has much more abounded;" for grace has not only put away their sin, and so kept pace with sin, to undermine it in all its bearings, but grace has brought them into a more blessed state in their union to Christ, than they had in Adam the first.

Immortal honours to the Lord! He raised them to higher heights of glory than that from which they fell. "Where sin abounded" in the elect of God, "grace does much more abound." It undermines, it upsets, it overturns, it takes the advantage of it to put a crown of glory upon the saved sinner which he could never have worn, had he lived as holy as God made Adam for ever. And thus we shall have to sing for ever, "Grace, grace, unto it." May the Lord the Spirit grant that you and I may feel something of the abounding of this grace.

Now if there should be any free-willers here tonight, and I dare say there are in some corner or another, who have come for some purpose or other, they are ready to say, "O! Then it does not matter; we may take our swing in sin; we may live in sin; we may take the whole pleasure of the heart in sin; for if grace 'much more abounds,' and takes advantage of sin to show more of its abounding, the more sin the more grace." Why, the devil has not so much impudence as you, whatever you may think of your piety.

For you never find, with all that the enemy of souls said to Christ, when he tabernacled here below, though he know him and knew the work he was come to accomplish, that he ever charged him so insolently as that. And indeed I do believe in my heart and soul that Arminianism produces an impudence that outstrips anything that Satan could do, in arraiging God at its bar and professing to judge the Almighty; and it encourages licentiousness thereby.

But what says the Lord the Spirit? "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Is that the real nature of the doctrine of God's superabounding grace, to bring us to "continue in sin?" Will it induce us to live a life of licentiousness? "God forbid." I can tell you this, if God never brings you feelingly and spiritually to hate sin and love holiness, irrespective of the fear of hell and the terrors of the damned, you will never get to heaven. If you only profess to hate sin and love holiness because you are afraid you shall go to hell if you do not, you are out of the secret to this present, and do not know the vitality of God's religion. For wherever the religion of Christ is revealed in the conscience by the power of the blessed Spirit, that man would hate sin, if there were no hell; and because he feels it as a plague in him, that is the very reason why he is so wretched in his feelings. That which he hates, he feels a something in him that loves; and it is his conflict. It is not so much the fear of hell as it is the nature, the horrible, filthy, unhallowed, ungodly nature of sin; and he would hate it if there were no such thing as a place called hell, and no wrath to come.

So said the apostle: "What, then! Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Now this staggers a child of God sometimes. He says, "Well, then, I cannot be of that number that are 'dead to sin,' if it is not possible for them to 'live any longer therein;' for I find myself plagued and tortured with it every day." I can tell thee this, poor soul, it is one thing for sin to live in thee, and another thing for thee to live in sin. When you were dead to God, and were alive to sin, sin was your home, your element, your delight, your pleasure; you were never happy but when committing it. Now that you are made alive to God, you still find sin lives in you, like a horrible, artful,

detestable thing, which is plundering you, torturing you, robbing you; and you have often prayed that the arrogant thief might be turned out of the house. But there he is, and I believe he will be there till God pulls the house down. But, then, at the same time, it is not you that live in that, it is not your element, it is not your home, it is not your pleasure; it is that that lives in you, and so is your plague and torment whilst here below; and, therefore, you may say with the apostle, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life." Now there is a solemn, a God-glorifying, soul-humbling immersion into the death of the Son of God, by the power of the Holy Ghost; thus truly and really being buried with Christ spiritually in spiritual baptism, solemnly immersed in him by the energy of God the Holy Ghost; and if this is spiritual baptism, water baptism, you know must be something like a burying, or else the figure has lost its design. There must be a burial there, to set forth in a figure what God in substance has revealed to the conscience. And being brought by the Spirit of God to have this spiritual immersion, there is a spiritual resurrection in the conscience to "newness of life" in the Lord Jesus Christ; and we are brought spiritually to be "planted together in the likeness of his resurrection."

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Our old man crucified?" Yes. Sin was crucified with Christ, first when his Majesty personally hung upon the cross; and it is crucified with him when his cross is spiritually revealed in the conscience. But observe, crucifixion was a lingering death; and so it is in the heart and conscience of God's people. They find that, though "the old man is crucified," still it lifts up its hateful head, and often brings them into bondage.

I. I shall notice this death.

II. This freedom.

I. First, this death. Now it has various branches in it. And I was going to say, as in nature so in grace. Now and then we hear of a person who appears healthy and strong in nature, dying suddenly; but that is not the general method of God. The greatest part of us have a lingering death,--some lingering affliction to bring on death. "But," say you, "do you think there are any sudden deaths in a spiritual sense?" Well, I do. I think the poor thief was not long in dying; for one of the evangelists tells us that both the thieves railed upon Christ while he hung upon the cross, and yet by and by we find one of them "dead" in the sense of our text, and saying, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And many a poor child of God has lived without God and without hope till his dying moments, and then God has appeared and made known the mystery of his cross, to let it be seen what grace can do. And sometimes I have thought, and I still think, and more than think, I believe, that the methods God takes in the dispensations of grace are such that he will put it out of the power of the devil to be able to say that there is any circumstance whatever that is a match for grace. If the whole church of God were to be taken to heaven, like the dying thief and some others, as soon as God is pleased to quicken their dead souls, the enemy might have it to say, "Ah! The Lord knows very well that if they were to live long, I should get them after all; I should upset their confidence and bring them back into my power; therefore he is obliged to take them to heaven." Now the Lord says, "No, Satan. They shall go through a variety of toils and troubles and distresses; and as it was in the case of Job, so shall it be with numbers of my people. The devil shall have fair play to do all the

devil can do, and yet I will save them and let the power of my omnipotent grace be known." But then, again, Satan might say, the Lord is obliged to take such lingering steps, or he could not accomplish the work. "No," says the Lord. "You shall not have that to say, I will let you know that my grace is such that it can 'cut the work short in righteousness;' and there shall be no case or circumstance out of the reach of the power and efficacy of my grace." Thus grace shall "reign through righteousness unto eternal life," and the whole church shall be brought to triumph in the mysteries of his love.

But now for this death. One of the first branches of it, in a general way, for I do not mean to insist upon every one being exactly alike, is a solemn cut to the world. Perhaps here may be some in this assembly, young men or young women, who were just springing up into life, gayety, and pleasure; and, ere they were aware, something has come into the conscience, given a desperate cut to all their worldly pleasure, and made them as dead to it almost as if they were already really dead; and they can take no pleasure in the world. And they think it very hard: "What! A young man, and young woman, like me, just ready to have a little pleasure, to have all my prospects dashed away in a moment?" It looks very desperate, does it not? But I can tell you, poor soul, you will have to bless God for it, some day or another. The Lord's design is to be the death of the world in thy heart, and to let thee know that all thou canst have pleasure in the world, or all that it flattered thee with, brings nothing but delusion. Thy soul sinks and finds that everything is dismal. And perhaps you will try to struggle against it. Many a poor child of God has struggled against it, taken a little pleasure again, and for a little while conquered these gloomy feelings. And if they have companions or relatives, especially if they are well off in this world, and these see them getting so gloomy, what methods will not be taken to put a stop to it! They will have about twice as many parties at their house as they used to have, and get them to go to all the amusements they can muster up, in order to bring them to be charmed with the world. They might as well try to charm them with the horrors of hell; for even if the poor soul is left for a while to find a kind of fleshly charm in these fleshly things, when God brings it in secret silence before him, it is death--death--to their minds, and they are ready to wish they had never been born.

This is one method God takes with his people. And now is there any person here who is just giving up the ghost, as it were, with the world? And have you, in order to keep a little liveliness in your souls, tried a little activity, a little pleasure and amusement? Perhaps you say, "I have." Then I will tell you, poor creature, what you have done; you have done all you can to damn your own soul: and, if God had let you, you would have done it. And in reality, I believe, there is not a sinner that would ever go to heaven, if God would let him go to hell; no, not one. But God is determined to bring death in the conscience, and bring the poor soul in dead to the world and to its charms; and so to come before the Lord as a poor guilty sinner, wanting to know what to "do to be saved."

But we observe, further. The poor creature, beginning to find that he has no pleasure in the world, begins to try in earnest to have some pleasure in pleasing God, in obeying the Lord; and if he knows the letter of the law, he will do his best to keep it to the letter. How he watches to love God with all his heart! How he watches to keep his eyes from covetous desires and his heart from covetous workings! And how he watches to keep the mind chaste, and to do that which is right before God! Sometimes the poor creature is ready to go to the Lord, and say, "Lord, if thou wilt but pardon what is past, if ever I do the like again, if ever I get into such company, into such practices and take such methods again, Lord, I will not find fault with thee if thou art pleased to damn me; for I shall know then that indeed it is righteous in thee, and I deserve it." And he thinks, when he has made such a solemn engagement as this, that he never dare sin again. But a thousand to one, he will do the very thing, or something worse. "Why," say you, "do you think

he will?" I am beyond thinking; I know he will. He will do that, or something worse, as sure as he breathes; and all his legal vows and legal promises will prove rotten, and not able to support him a single moment; not able to prop up his mind. And when they are taken from under him, he is brought then to be dead to the law. How so? The "sentence of death" comes upon all his power to keep the law of God; and he feels, in his very soul, that if God's law is "holy and just and good," he must inevitably perish; and he is brought to be as dead to any hope of salvation from the law, or by his works according to the law, as a corpse can possibly be. And you will never know much of your ruined condition till God has slaughtered you, and made you as dead as a sinner at the borders of hell, entirely dead, to have no help or hope in yourself of obeying the Lord in his law, or bringing anything like peace or salvation to you by it.

Perhaps the poor soul, when brought to this point, may be under the painful situation of listening to legalizing preachers; and they will tell him he must repent and believe and love God and do his duty and be decidedly pious, and then God will love him. And very often they will stretch forth their hands, and apparently their heart, wonderfully, and say, "Come now, repent now, believe now; now is the time; if you do not embrace this opportunity, perhaps you will never have another; now is the time; it is now or never." And the poor creature, raised up with a kind of zeal to imagine that he will try to do his best, is struck dead again; and if he is to be damned that moment, he can neither repent, nor believe, nor do anything that they set him to do. He finds his heart hard as a flint and his mind in such a confused way that he can neither repent nor believe, nor have tenderness of conscience, nor love of God. And thus he becomes dead to all help or hope in self, grounded upon these legal efforts and these legal exhortations. And perhaps there may be some poor soul in this assembly tonight who is there; who has been trying for many a long month again and again, making fresh vows and promises and doubting his diligence in order to do something pleasing to God; and you feel in your very soul that the more you try the further you are off. I congratulate you. I thank God you cannot get on; and I pray that God will never let you get on, but that every step you take you may be more and more dead, till you are stiffly dead, and without ability in your feelings to lift up a finger or do anything towards helping your own soul. And if ever the Lord the Spirit brings you to that death, by and by he will reveal spiritual life, and lead you to know the blessedness of that truth: "I am the resurrection and life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

But we pass on to notice, that in God's own time such a poor soul is brought to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. 7:4) I admire the method that God the Spirit has taken to state these things. "I through the law am dead to the law," says the apostle; that is, through the law he is dead to all hope or help in or from the law; it kills him; it leaves him no ground of expectation. But by and by he comes to this point: "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"

For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." Now this is another death, another solemn stroke of death. To be "dead to the law through the law," and to be "dead to the law through the body of Christ," are two things. "Why," say you, "what is it, then, to be dead to the law by the body of Christ?"

When the poor soul has been killed out and out, again and again in his own feelings, to all hope and expectation in self or the law, by and by Christ is revealed to him "the hope of glory." By "the body of Christ" we are to understand the whole body of the finished work of the Son of God; it is what Christ calls "eating his flesh and drinking his blood;" it is taking him, a whole Christ, by divine faith, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and thus, when the whole body of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is

blessedly and sweetly revealed to the conscience by the Spirit of the living God, the man becomes dead to the law.

How? Dead to the law curses, dead to law claims; it is no longer a yoke of bondage, while he enjoys this; it is no longer a killing letter to him, while he enjoys this; no longer is the sentence of condemnation felt, while he enjoys this. The blessed "body of Christ," his atonement, his finished work, and the blessings connected with it, revealed to his conscience, bring a free pardon,--a pardon of all sin, past, present and to come, a free justification, and he is justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Yes, it comes, and brings a constraining energy with it; and instead of the man sinking in gloom and dismay, he finds that the law can no longer keep him from crying to the Lord, hoping in the Lord, trusting in the Lord, resting in the Lord, holding solemn and sweet and blessed intercourse with the Lord. He feels his heart at freedom with the Lord, and the Lord at freedom with him. Christ is graciously pleased, by the power of his Spirit, to make manifest that blessed truth, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:36) Bondage is gone, guilt has taken wings and fled away; the soul is drawn forth in a blessed enjoyment of the Lord, and he sings the wonders of redeeming grace and triumphs in it.

And I tell thee, poor soul, when the Lord the Spirit brings thee here in thy conscience, wraps thee up manifestively in Christ, and brings Christ and his atoning blood into thy heart, there is not a sentence in God's law that can bring to thy conscience; not a sentence in God's law that can make a claim at thy hands. Thou art brought to deliver up in the court of God a receipt in full, signed and sealed by the blood of the God-man Mediator; and thus thou hast enlargement of heart.

And while thou art dead to the law curses and law claims, thou art alive to grace blessings and grace unfoldings, and thus art brought to have a sweet and solemn blessedness in Christ as "the Lord thy righteousness and strength." And he that is thus "dead," "is freed from sin."

It is the soul thus "dead" that the Lord had in view when he influenced the apostle to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33) Some people say, "Ah! It means those who have got the second blessing, those who are perfect in the flesh, who have no sin about them." You cannot find any of them. You may find some impudent arrogant hypocrites, as hard as the devil can make them, who talk about it; but you never find a soul that is really in that case. But you find the apostle, and the Lord by the apostle, does not lay that down as any ground upon which he sends this challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He says, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." The death of Christ is revealed in the conscience by the Spirit of God; faith realizes it and triumphs in it, and thus becomes dead to the power of any one to lay any charge against it in the court of God. Here law is magnified, justice satisfied, devils defeated, sin destroyed, death swallowed up in victory, and the world overcome; and God brings this justification, this entire and blessed atonement, to the conscience. But then it is added, "Yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." God help thee, poor soul, to read this and feel it! God the Spirit reveal it to some poor trembling conscience this night, and give him faith to realize it,--that the justifying act of God, through the finished work of Christ and the glorious resurrection of the Son of God, his ascension and intercession, all plead before the throne of God the poor soul's eternal acquittal, and defy either devils or men to bring him in guilty. O the blessedness of such a death as this in the conscience, when the Lord the Spirit reveals it there! Thus we "become dead to the law by the body of Christ."

But we pass on to another branch of this death. While the poor child of God enjoys this, he goes singing away. These are very cheerful moments, very pleasant enjoyments. "Well, but," say you, "if he once enjoys it, he always enjoys it; does not he?" No; not unless God is about to take him home directly, as he did the dying thief. Grace must be tried. God will try every step of his work, and he will try this. If the poor soul lives long, it will be tried. You may hear some people talk about being always "on the mount," and being in the blessed enjoyment of this always; and they will say, "Why, now, do not you enjoy it? You talk about it, and say you wish you could get at it; it is free; why do you not fully enjoy it?" And thus they stagger many a poor, tried child of God; but still the poor soul cannot get at a constant, unshaken joy. No; and I do not believe God will ever let his children thus "get at it," if they live long in this world. There must be a trial of faith, and a passing into the various branches of the kingdom of God through tribulation; and we only know the sweetness and blessedness of it as we obtain it through tribulation.

Well. After we have had our sweet moments, our sweet enjoyments, we must, all of us, have another stroke of death. And what is that? The Lord tells us a little about it in the prophecy of Hosea: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness." (Hos. 2:14) That is another step. When God has allured her by the charms of his love, the manifestations of his mercy, then she must go into the wilderness, and see what wilderness work is, where beasts of prey appear, and where darkness and storms are.

And what then? Why, after she has tried the trackless desert for a while, is ready to give up, and to look upon all hope as gone, the Lord says, "And I will speak comfortably unto her, and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope." You know what the valley of Achor was, I suppose. It was so called from Achan being stoned there, when he has stolen the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold, and had troubled Israel. And so the poor child of God sometimes is carried away, so as to steal a Babylonish garment, when he has been brought into enjoyment, and imagines that he can now dress himself and adorn himself and be very beautiful.

Come, come, poor soul, thou wilt be brought to a trial just now. God will cast the lot upon thee, and thou wilt be brought to acknowledge the Babylonish garment and wedge of gold led thee to swerve in some degree from the simplicity of the gospel. But even then in the valley of Achor there shall be "a door of hope." God will open some "door of hope" in the midst of thy distresses. But whilst thou art there, and hast no "door of hope," what a death it is to all thy sweet feelings and views, and to all thy imaginary power.

Why, you will become so dead in your feelings that the enemy of souls will tell you that all was a delusion, that all was a deception, and that Satan wrought it all and accomplished it all. And very often his infernal majesty will talk to you, and say, "Where is your tenderness of conscience? Where is your spirit of prayer? Where is your praise? Where is your adoration of God now? What a bewildered fool you look like!" Ah! How bewildered you do feel and look like a fool, when you find you are in a desert, and feel in your heart that you are as dead as Ezekiel's bones were, and you cannot raise any joy or peace or hope in your conscience!

And yet you hear men say you can and you ought to do it. But instead of that propping up your hope, it sets you ragging and sinks you deeper and deeper in dismay; and all hope seems gone. You really cannot feel the lifting up of your heart any way; you are so dead, and left a lifeless lump in your feelings. But God brings forth "a vineyard of red wine" manifestively into your conscience, and "gives you your vineyards from thence." He opens the mysteries of his blood and love more than he did before, and now you see it is so manifestively of grace that you have not a word of self to plead; and "he that is" thus "dead, is freed from sin."

Now do you now anything of this death? Has God ever killed you? If it is the will of God, I wish he may kill you. I do not mind your being affronted at me, if God is pleased to kill you. You may grumble and murmur against me as long as you will, if God will but kill you to self and self hope, lead you to know that you must be slaughtered to it all, have your soul bathed in the blood and love of Immanuel, and find your rest in him. And when you are brought to this death, you will be led to see that you cannot enjoy one particle of the mysteries of the gospel but as God brings it to your conscience, and to feel that you as much need the revelation of the truth to your conscience by the Holy Ghost as you need a Christ to atone for your sin, and that you can no more bring the life and power of God to your conscience than you could die for your sins and atone for your sins. And then you find that God is to have all the glory from first to last. This will be the death-blow to your Arminianism, and the sooner it is dead and buried the better. May God Almighty, in his rich mercy, produce a solemn death and burial in some of your consciences, and revive his love and life and power, that you may know the blessedness of a free-grace gospel, a free-grace salvation in your souls; and then you will know the blessedness of being "dead." "He that is dead, is freed from sin."

II. Now we pass on to this freedom. And I must be brief. First, negatively. It is not a freedom from the inbeing of sin. As I have hinted, though the man does not live in sin, sin lives in him; and the Holy Ghost leads us to say, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us;" and if the truth is not in us, there must be something else in us; therefore we must be filled with lies and errors and confusion. You will find that if you are dead to sin, sin is not dead to you. There it is; it works in your members and brings you into bondage. And it is a sweet thing when we can come to the apostle's conclusion (I do not mean presumptuously and arrogantly, I know what it is both ways), when we can say, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that is in me." You cannot always get there; and you will try, poor soul, sometimes arrogantly and presumptuously to get there; I know you will, especially if you have a judgment well stored with the doctrines of the gospel. You will think, "Why should I be so much tossed about with the workings of corrupt nature? It is not I; it is sin in me;" and you will think for a moment that sin is but a little thing, and you will begin to trifle with sin. Now, whenever you begin to trifle with sin, you may know it is the devil's work; it is the life of hell in your poor soul; it will bring hell into the conscience, depend upon it. You may stiffen your conscience as much as you will; but if you are a child of God, it will bring hell into your conscience, as sure as God is God. A child of God, then, is dead to sin; but still the workings of it are there. Dead sin does not plague him; but it is sin alive-in him that tortures him.

Further. He is not dead to the possibility of falling into practical sin. David was a man of God, and he sinned practically. Solomon was a man of God, and he sinned practically. Peter was a man of God, and he sinned practically. And if there are any of you who are men of God or women of God, and have been so for half a dozen years, and have felt proof of it, and given proof of it, and have never sinned practically, GET UP, AND LET US LOOK AT YOU! Show your faces; and let it be seen what a wonderful phenomenon you are. But alas! alas! If you have proper feelings, you hang down your heads; and there is not a soul that can lift it up upon that ground. You know that you have brought bondage into your minds, with some unhallowed thing or other, though it may not have been what has been noticed by others. So you are not "dead" in this sense.

Well, then, in what sense are they "dead" and "freed from sin?" If they are brought by the blessed Spirit of the living God into the things we have been looking at, they are dead, first, to the damning power of sin.

"If sin be pardon'd, I'm secure;

Death has no sting beside;

The law gives sin its damning power,

But Christ my Ransom died."

Sin, though that horrible thing which has ruined the whole creation, and brought death and devastation, is destroyed by the body of Christ. He "condemned sin in the flesh;" and when his blessed condemnation of sin is revealed in the conscience, it brings life and pardon and peace, and the soul becomes dead to the damning power of sin.

Further. They are dead to the reigning power of sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Now our preachers in general say that if we are not under the law, then we are at liberty to sin. I wonder whether they would have courage to get their pen and scratch out that passage. Scratch it out, and say it ought not to be in the Bible, if you insist upon it that not to be under the law is the high road to sin. God says it is just the reverse. While we are under the law, and it comes with its commanding and condemning authority, it stirs up sin; but when we are brought to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ," grace makes the heart tender, brings us to have holy freedom with God, and delivers us from the reigning power of sin, for sin shall not reign. True enough, now and then it will kick up a riot; but rioting is not reigning. It is a monstrous enemy, and sometimes kicks up such a riot in the conscience of the poor child of God that he is ready to think that it does reign, and that he must be under the dominion of it; but eventually he will find that its reigning power is gone. And sometimes you will find, when Moses comes, if I may so speak, and reads the Riot Act when sin is terrifying your conscience, it almost terrifies you to death, and you think you shall be taken up at last as a traitor, for you cannot quell it; nor can all the Riot Acts in the world. But when the great High Priest of our profession comes, and reads love, blood, pardon, peace, and reconciliation in your heart, the very rioting is subdued; and you feel yourself "dead to the law by the body of Christ," and so are led to glorify him.

Further. They are dead to the love of sin. But here wants a little distinction made between that in the child of God which is alive to God, and the working of sin still; for sin is still there,--"the body of sin," the image of Satan, and it sometimes works so powerfully that really the child of God is afraid he does love sin, for there is something about him that loves it. "What!" say you. "Do you think that a child of God, really called by grace, has anything about him that loves sin?" I am beyond thinking; I know it; and it plagues and tortures his poor mind sometimes till he hardly knows where to look. But when God opens to him a little of Solomon's prayer, he gets into it! "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, then hear thou in heaven." There are some people that do not appear to know the meaning of it; they do not feel any heart-plague within them. Well, then, they are not interested in that prayer. But other people feel the plague of it. Yet they have something about them that loves it, and that makes the plague so much the more torturing to the mind; but then there is something about them that does not love it. Do not you find in secret something thirsting after Jesus, crying to Jesus, loving Jesus? And now and then it appears to be heaved up, as if it were under an intolerable mountain; and its breathings are, "O Lord, I hate vain thoughts." Is it not so? Now, this very principle that "hates vain thoughts" is the life of God, that has been the death of your sin, and the death of your soul to all creature-help. Here is a death, therefore, a real death in the spiritual mind, to all the pleasures and enjoyments and love of sin.

But, to conclude. It shall be a complete death at last to the inbeing of sin, and sin in all its bearings. Poor child of God! A few more struggles, a little more conflict, and thou shalt sing victory over thy pride and lust and bad tempers. There shall be a complete death below, and thou shalt be raised above into the

enjoyment of it all, and eternally sing, Victory through the blood of the Lamb." And then thou shalt enter fully into the ineffable glory of him who has been the death of deaths, the death of sin; and the life of lifes, the life of God in thy soul.

May God bless you and me with the sweet enjoyment of this immortal truth, for his mercy's sake. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-gadsby/the-souls-death-unto-sin/>

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